DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 036 139 EF 004 096

TITLE "SECCND GUESS." A NEW CONCEPT IN SCHOOL PLANNING.
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PUB DATE 69
NOTE 15P.

EDRS PRICE EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.85
DESCRIPTORS *FLEXIBLE FACILITIES, *INTERIOR SPACE, *MIDDLE SCHOOLS, *OPEN PLAN SCHOOLS, SCHOOL ARCHITECTURE, SCHOOL BUILDINGS, *SCHCOL DESIGN, SCHOOL SPACE

ABSTRACT

DESIGN AND STRUCTURAL AND FUNCTIONAL FEATURES ARE DESCRIBED FOR KIRKWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL OF HOUSTON, TEXAS. SPECIAL FEATURES ARE--(1) THE OPEN PLAN DESIGN, (2) MOVABLE WALLS, AFFORDING TOTAL FLEXIBILITY, (3) A RAMP SYSTEM FOR VERTICAL CIRCULATION, AND (4) BUILT-IN PLANNING FOR FUTURE GROWTH. DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATIONS ARE INCLUDED THROUGHOUT. (FS)

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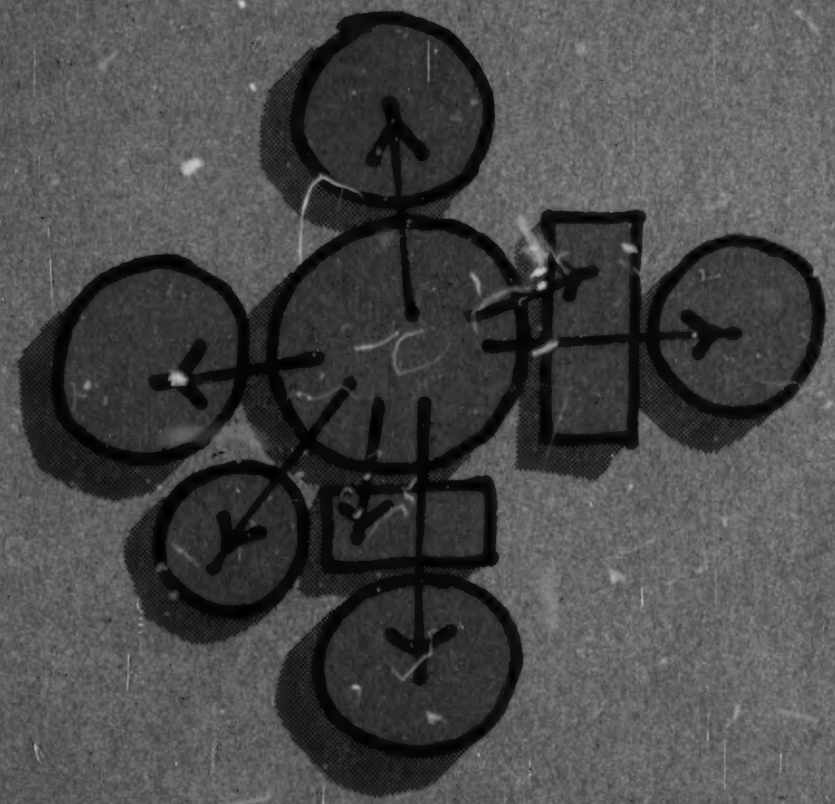

"SECOND GUESS"
A NEW CONCEPT IN SCHOOL PLANNING

KIRKWOOD: A NEW JUNIOR HIGH OR MIDDLE SCHOOL FOR THE SPRING BRANCH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT HOUSTON, TEXAS

IRVING R. KLEIN AND ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS/PLANNERS HOUSTON, TEXAS

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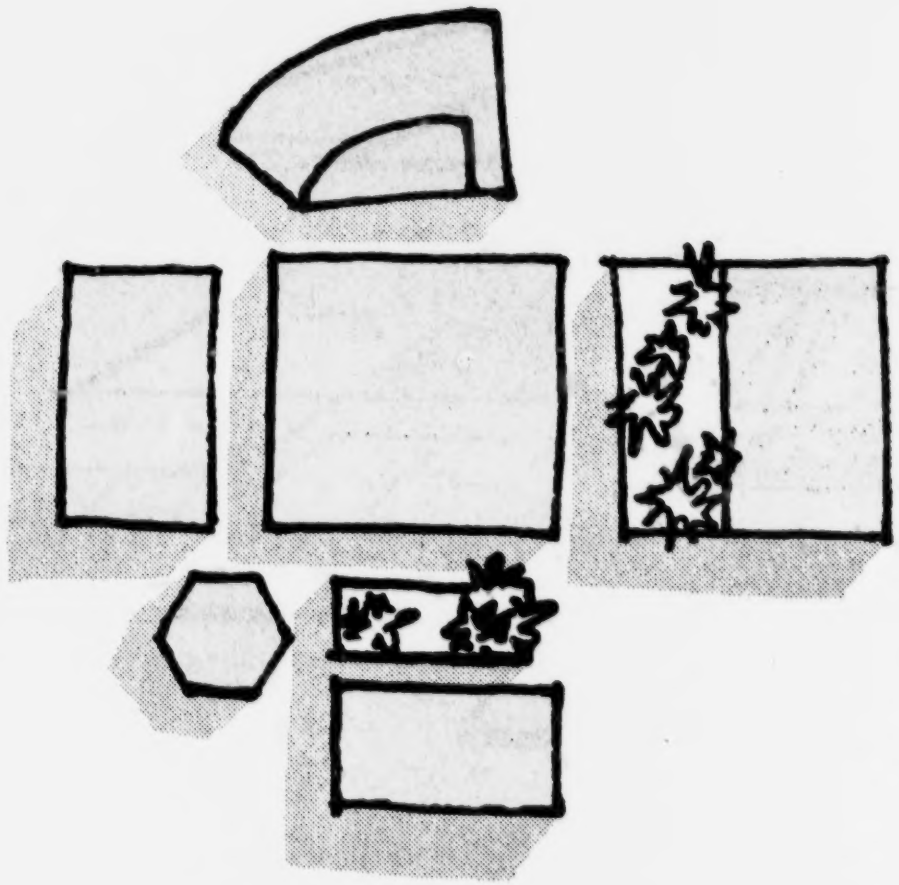
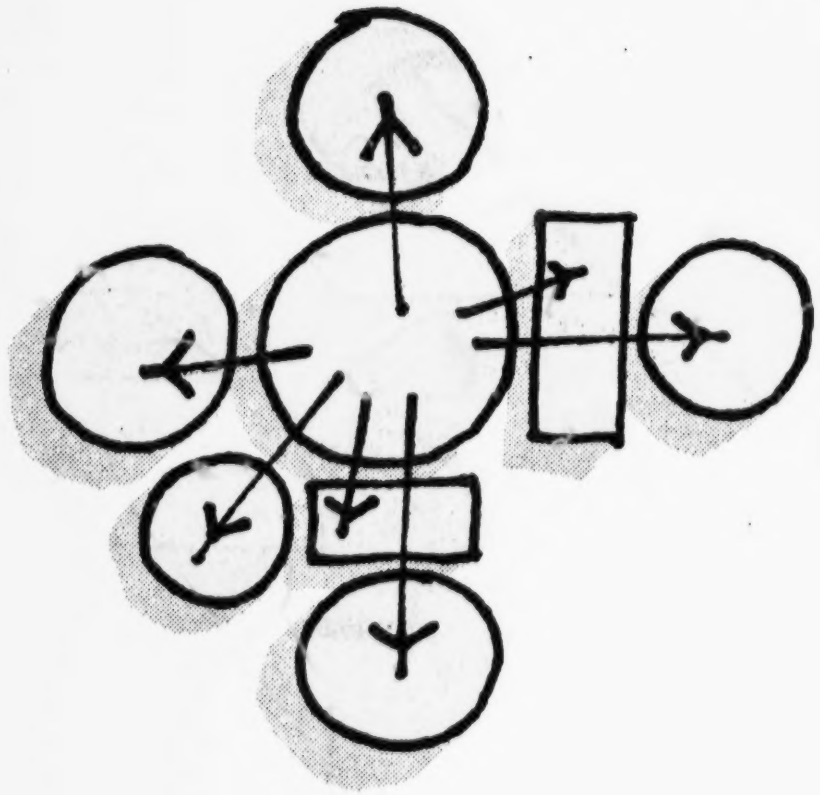
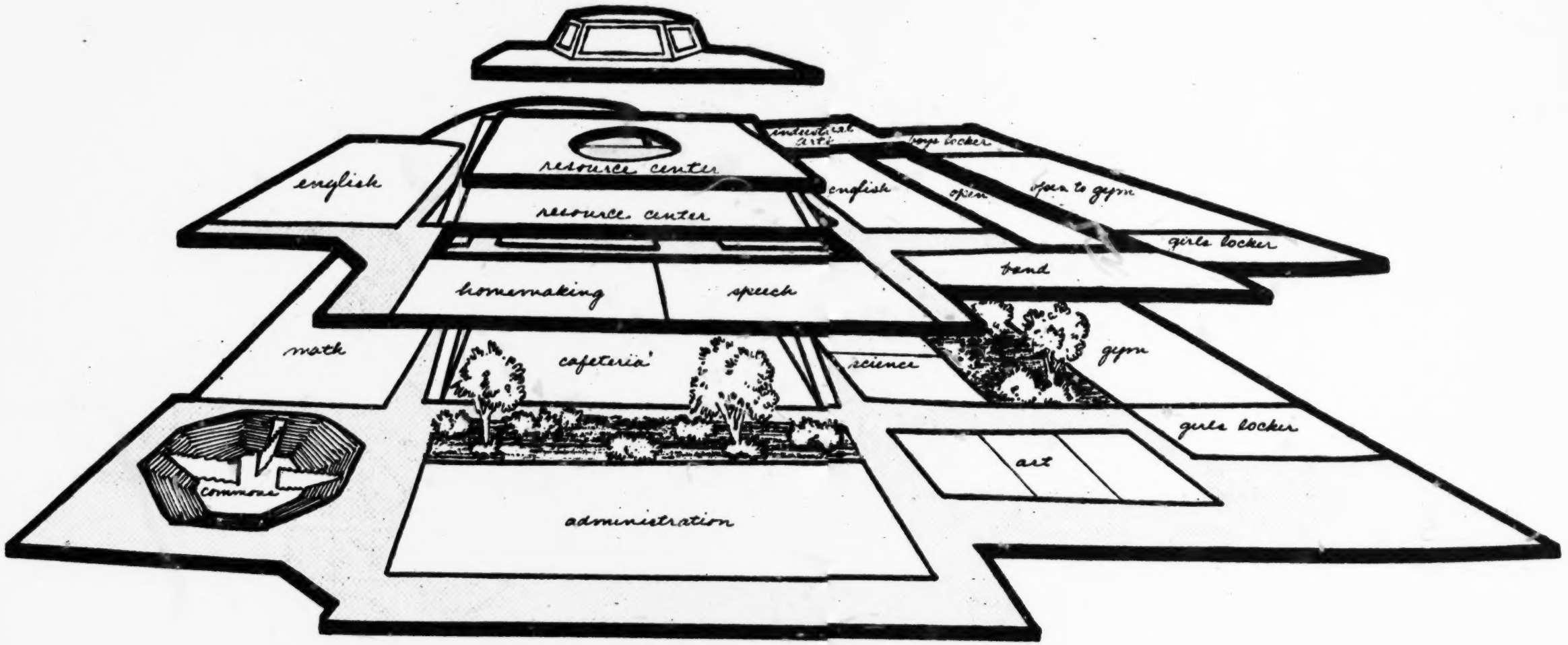
The "2nd guess" concept in school design





IN A TIME OF RAPID CHANGE IN EDUCATION, SCHOOL DESIGN NEEDS A SYSTEM WHICH WILL PERMIT INEVITABLE MISTAKES. THE CONVENTIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOL WITH ITS "EGG CRATE" DESIGN, ITS DOUBLE LOADED CORRIDORS, AND ITS PERMANENT CLASSROOM PARTITIONS IS NO LONGER AN ADEQUATE SOLUTION. THUS, AFTER EXTENSIVE RESEARCH BY THE ARCHITECTS, THE "BUILT IN SECOND GUESS" CONCEPT HAS EVOLVED AT KIRKWOOD. RESEARCH HAS INCLUDED INSPECTION TRIPS TO OTHER FACILITIES, AN OPEN MIND, AND CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES LABORATORIES OF NEW YORK CITY, WHICH IS PART OF THE FORD FOUNDATION.

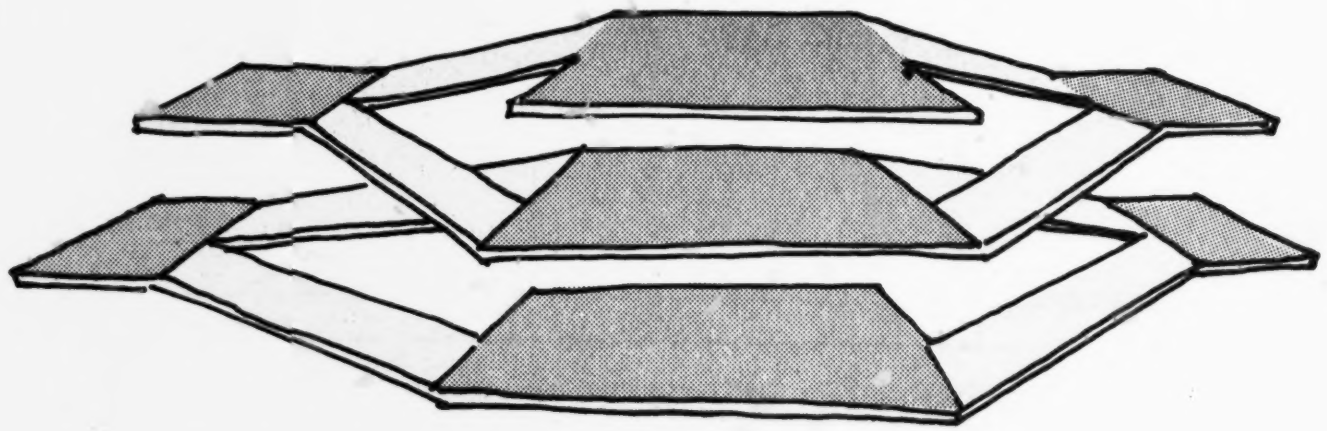


The "open plan" design lends itself to change

IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE MOST IDEAL ENVIRONMENT, ALL FLOORS WILL BE CARPETED EXCEPT IN THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION, TOILET AND SERVICE AREAS. A FLEXIBLE ELECTRICAL GRID SYSTEM IS TO BE LOCATED IN THE FLOOR SYSTEM, WITH FLOOR OUTLET LOCATIONS INDICATED BY CONTRASTING COLORED CARPET INLAYS.

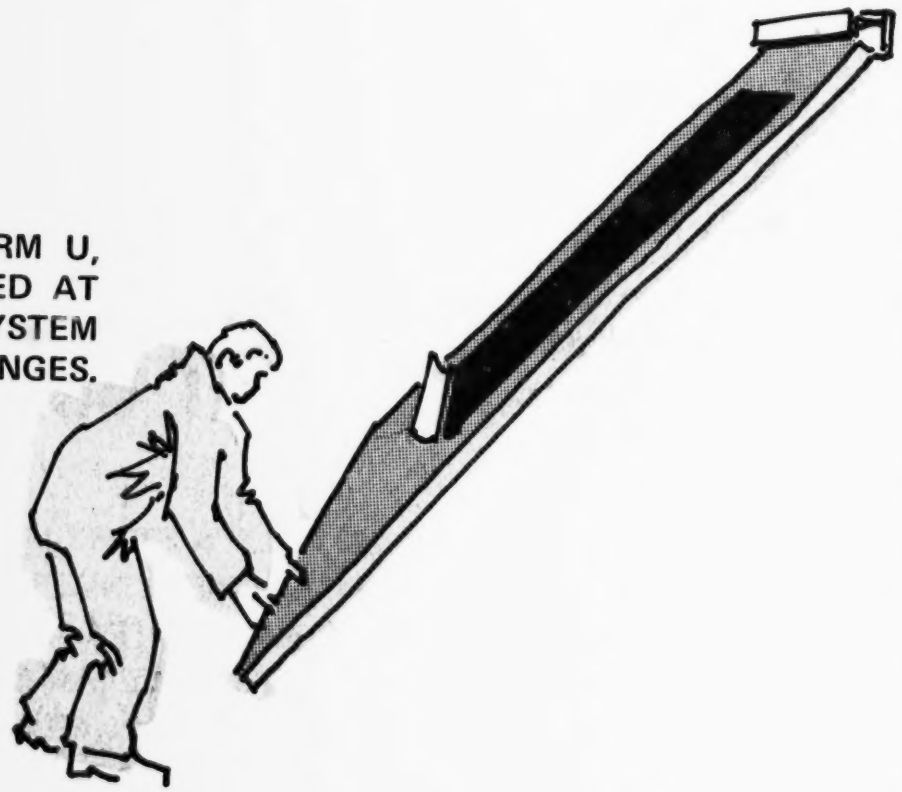
Split levels offer advantages

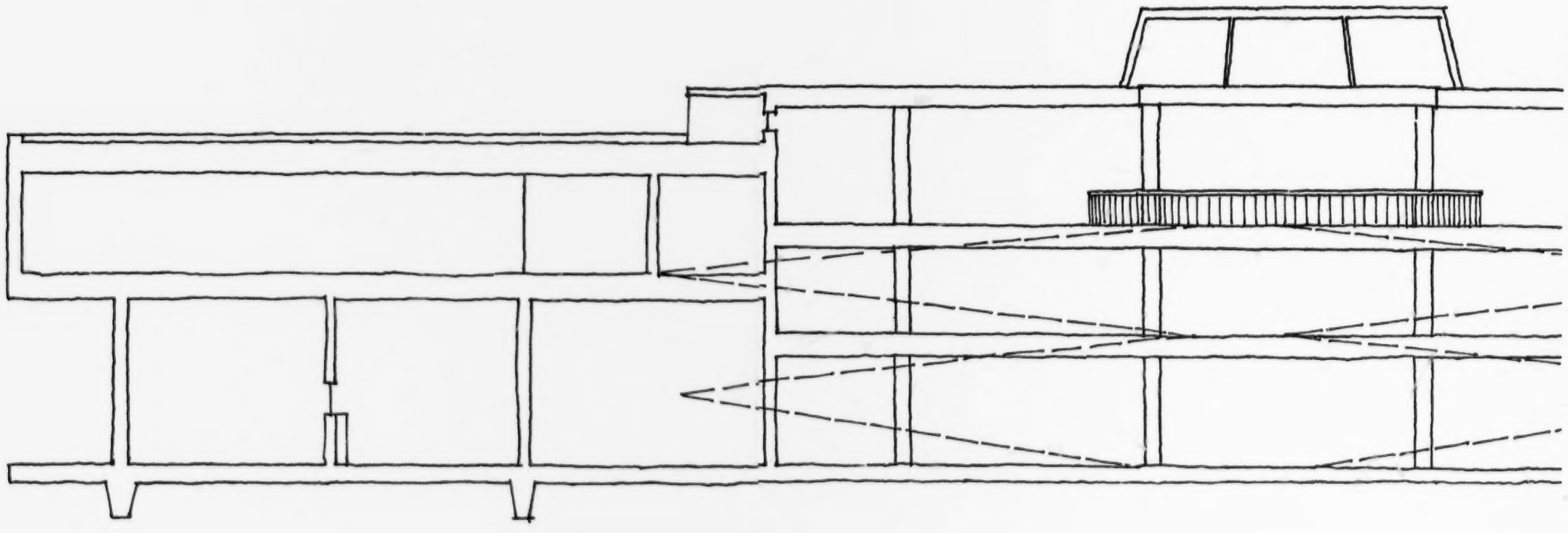
STUDENTS AT THE FIRST LEVEL WILL ONLY TRAVEL A HALF LEVEL DOWN ON AN EASY RAMP TO THE CAFETERIA, OR A HALF LEVEL UP TO THE FIRST LEVEL OF THE LEARNING CENTER. FURTHERMORE, THE RAMPS CAN EASILY BE USED BY STUDENTS IN WHEELCHAIRS, AND FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL MOVING EXPENSIVE AUDIO VISUAL, TELEVISION AND OTHER EQUIPMENT FROM ONE LEVEL TO ANOTHER.



Movable walls offer total flexibility

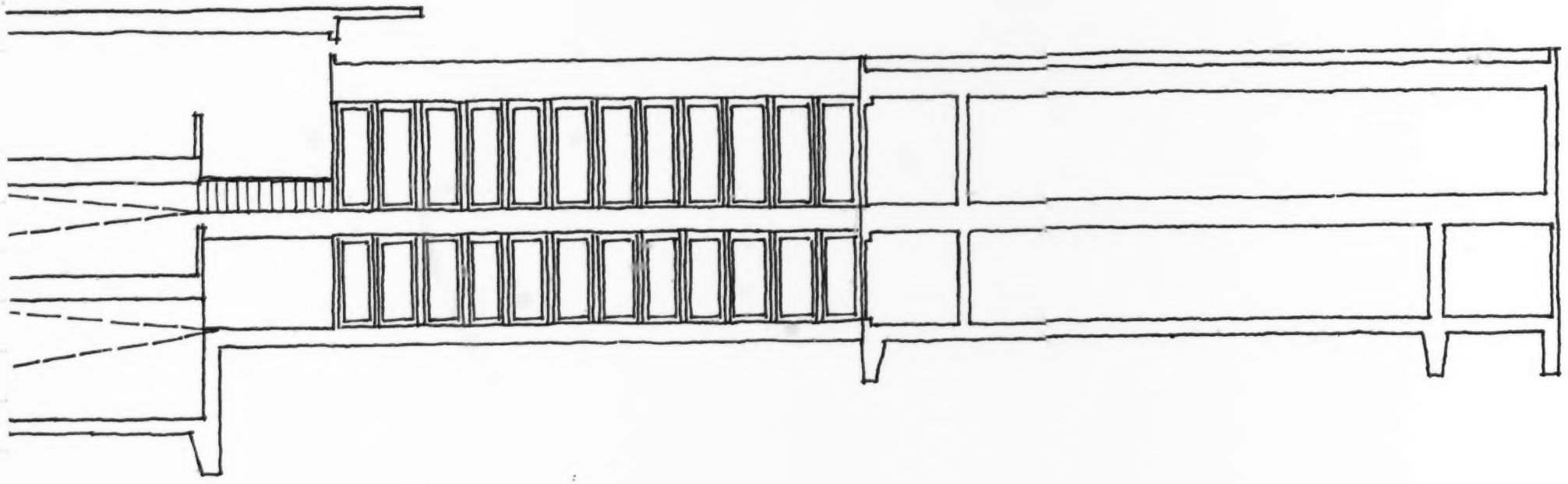
WHERE PARTITIONS ARE NEEDED WITHIN OPEN TEACHING AREAS TO FORM U, TRIANGULAR OR ANY OTHER SHAPED AREAS, SAME WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED AT KIRKWOOD WITH A NEW LOW DECIBLE RATED MOVABLE WALL SYSTEM. THE SYSTEM IS SO SIMPLE THAT SCHOOL PERSONNEL CAN EASILY MAKE OVERNIGHT CHANGES.





The "heart" of the school is a three level central core

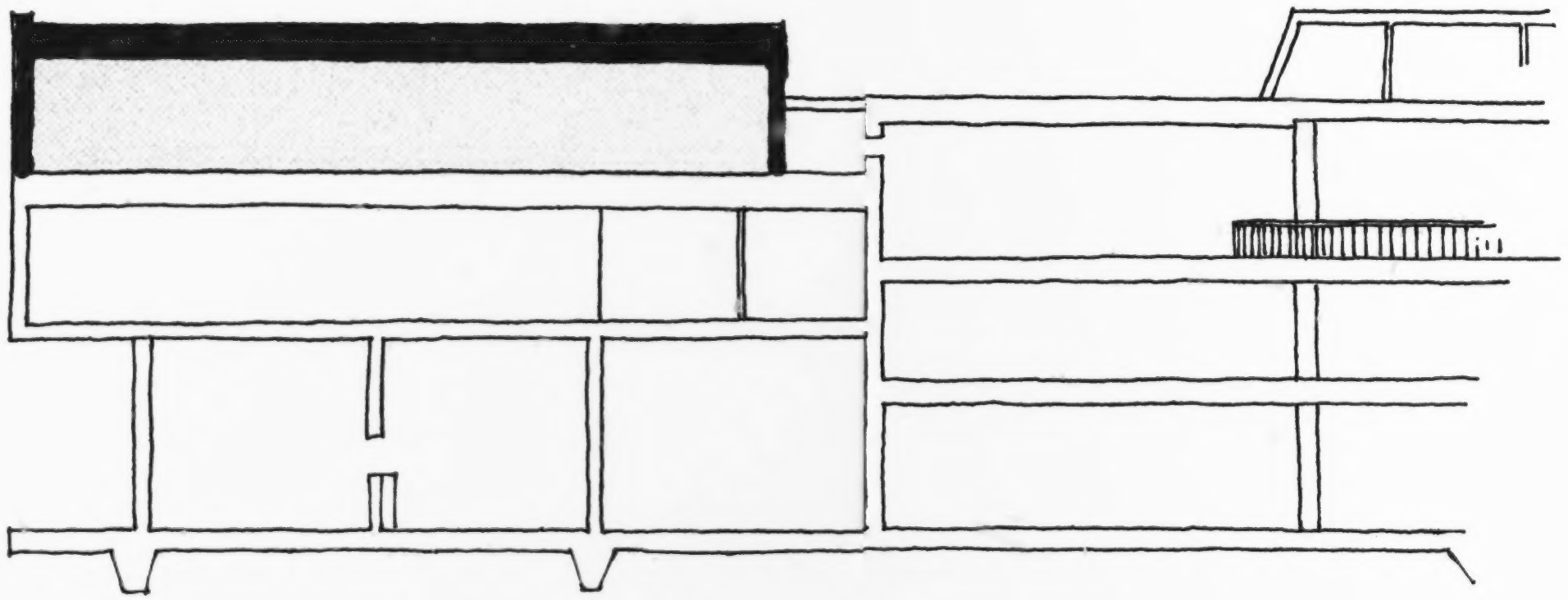
THE FIRST LEVEL IS DEPRESSED HALF A STORY INTO THE GROUND AND WILL HOUSE A CAFETERIA SEATING 600 STUDENTS, WHICH AT THE EAST END WILL OVERLOOK A BEAUTIFULLY LANDSCAPED COURT. THE CAFETERIA CONTAINS A SPEAKERS PLATFORM SO THAT IT CAN ALSO BE USED FOR LARGE MEETINGS. ABOVE THE CAFETERIA IS LOCATED A TWO LEVEL RESOURCE OR LEARNING CENTER. THIS CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY FOR ALL THE STUDENTS WILL CONTAIN ELECTRONIC AIDS, INCLUDING AUDIO-VISUAL AND INFORMATION RETRIEVAL EQUIPMENT, TAPE RECORDERS, BOOKS, CHARTS, MAPS, AND STUDY CARRELS.



A "ramp system" provides ideal vertical circulation

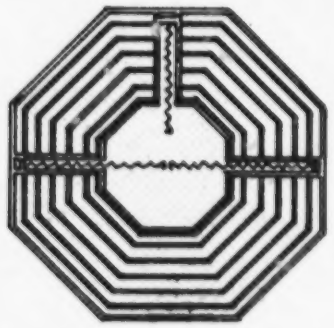
THE THREE LEVEL CAFETERIA AND RESOURCE CENTER, WITH THE FIRST LEVEL A HALF STORY BELOW GRADE, IS FLANKED ON THE NORTH AND SOUTH BY TWO LEVEL TEACHING WINGS WHICH CONTAIN MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, FOREIGN LANGUAGES, ENGLISH AND SOCIAL STUDIES. THIS AREA ALSO CONTAINS TEACHERS PLANNING CENTERS, LOCKER AREAS AND TOILET FACILITIES FOR STUDENTS.

THE SECOND LEVEL OF THE RESOURCE CENTER WILL CONTAIN SIMILAR EQUIPMENT AND WILL HAVE A THIRTY FOOT DIAMETER CIRCULAR WELL AND CLEARSTORY WINDOWS ON ALL FOUR SIDES WHICH WILL PERMIT NATURAL LIGHT TO FILTER INTO BOTH LEVELS OF THE RESOURCE CENTER.

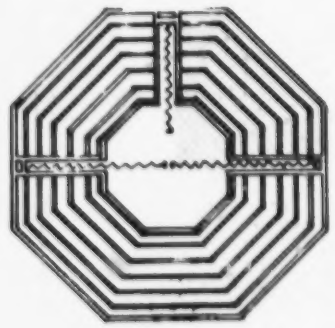


"Built in" planning for future growth

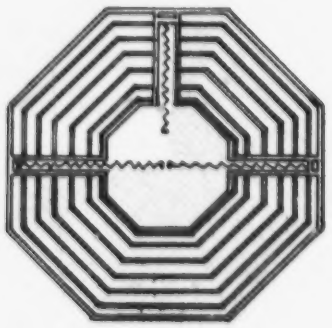
SINCE ALL NEW SCHOOLS IN A CITY SUCH AS HOUSTON, WITH ITS RAPID GROWTH IN SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, ADD TEMPORARY STRUCTURES A YEAR OR SO AFTER THEY ARE OPENED, THE ARCHITECTS WERE INSTRUCTED, AS PART OF THE DESIGN PROGRAM, TO DETERMINE THE BEST METHOD FOR INCREASING FACILITIES TO HOUSE A FUTURE STUDENT BODY OF 2,000, OR AN ADDITION OF 500 STUDENTS. THIS HAS BEEN DONE BY DESIGNING A STRUCTURE AND FOUNDATIONS FOR AN ADDITIONAL FLOOR IN THE TWO STORY WINGS WHICH FLANK THE THREE-LEVEL CAFETERIA AND LEARNING CENTER CORE ON THE NORTH AND SOUTH.



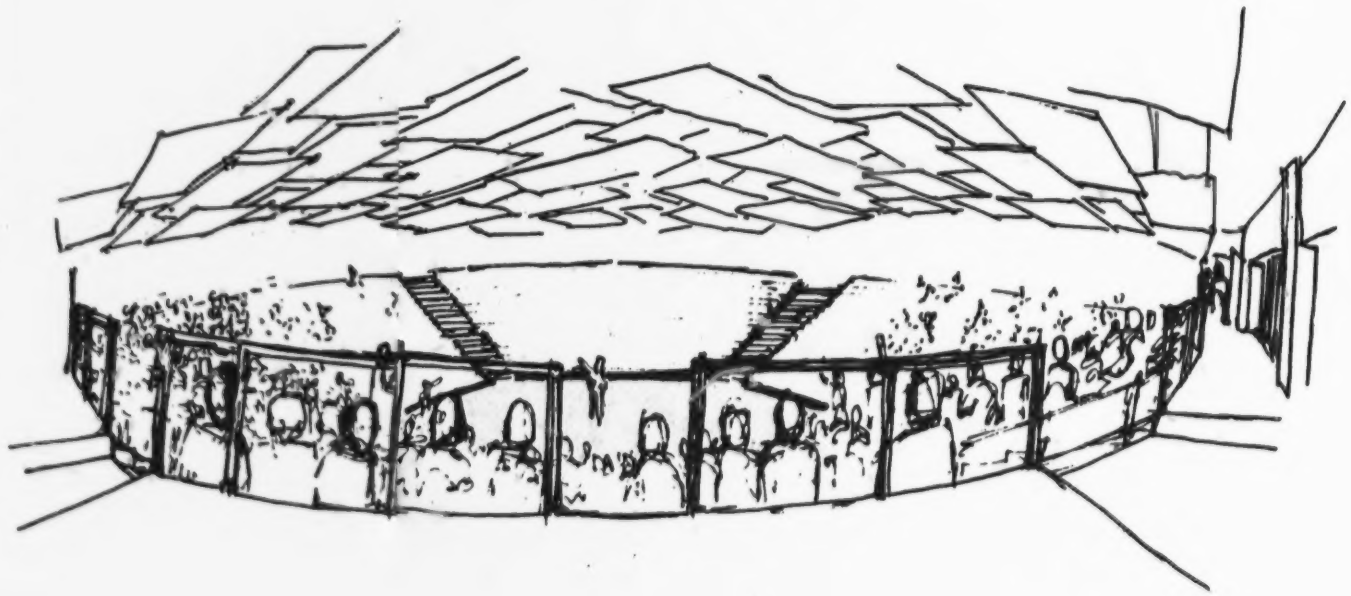
Large Groups



Small Groups

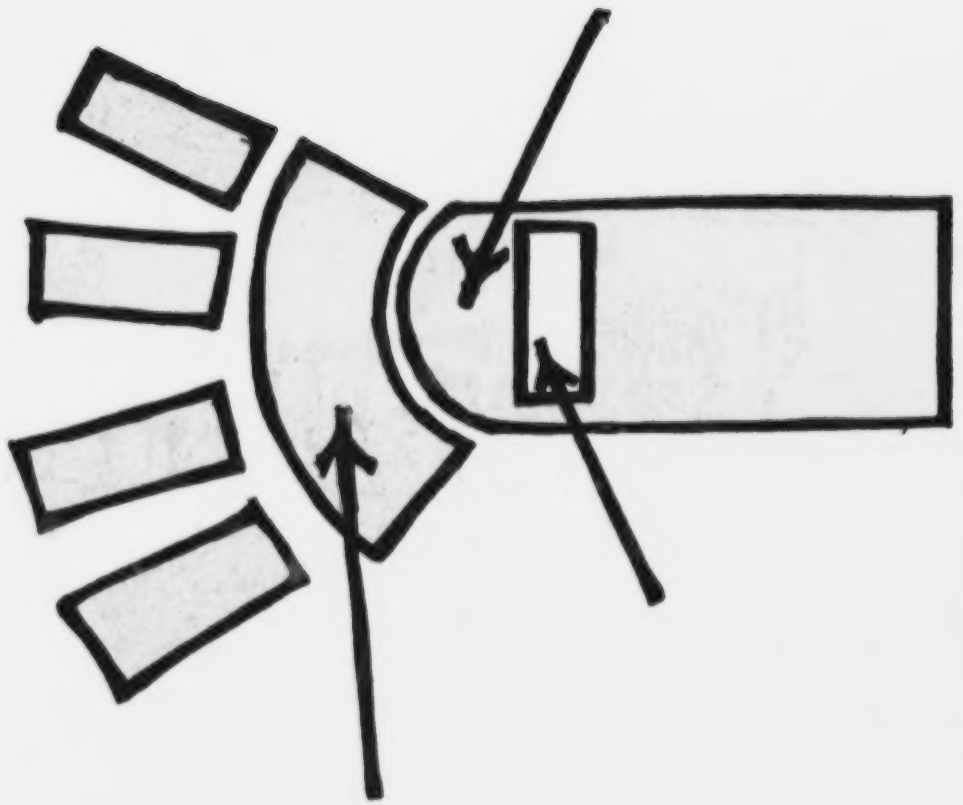


Medium Groups



No formal auditorium. A "commons hall" will serve a variety of functions.

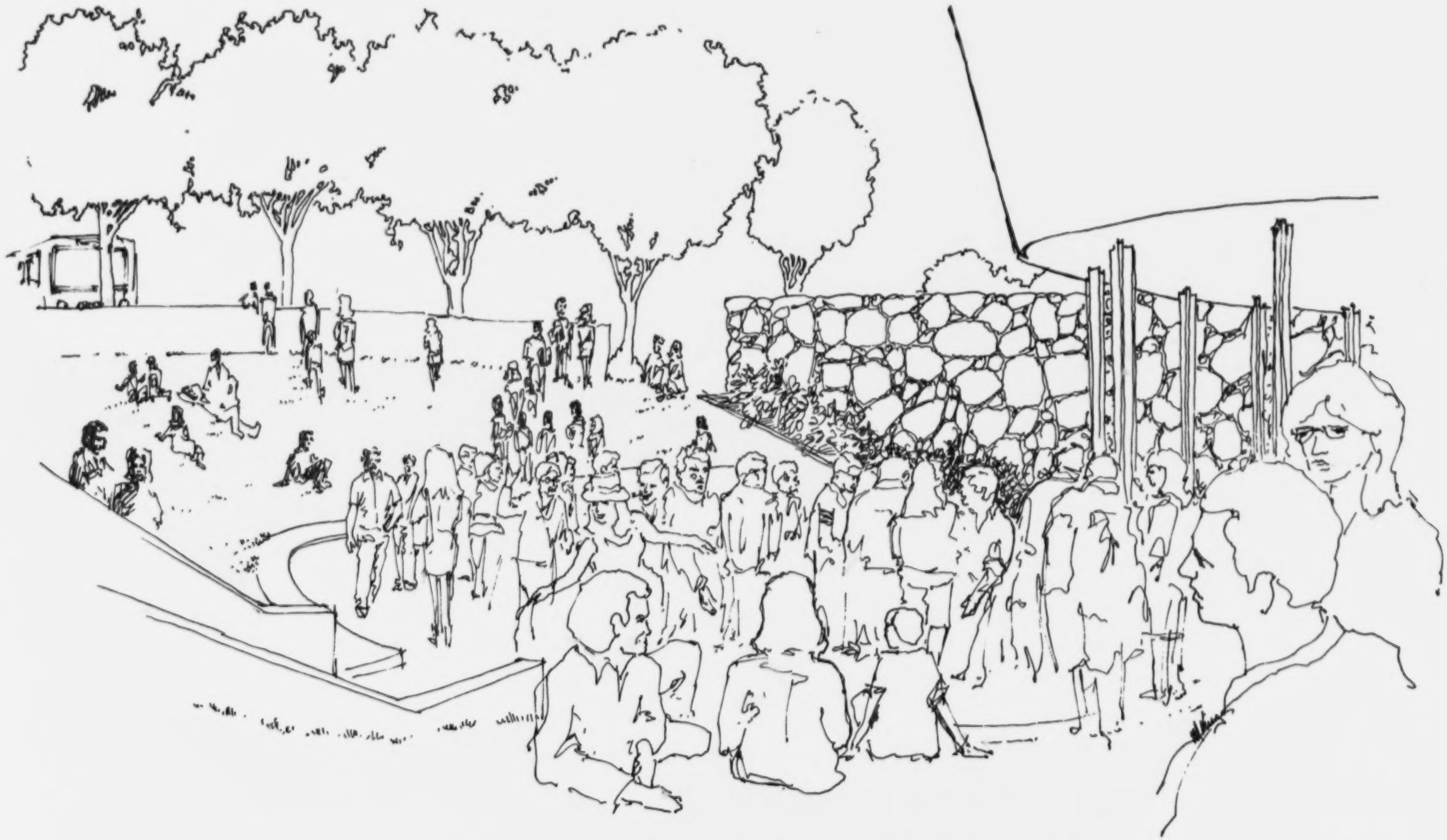
RESEARCH INDICATED THAT THE CONVENTIONAL SCHOOL AUDITORIUM IS USED TO ITS CAPACITY ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE SCHOOL YEAR. SINCE THE AUDITORIUM IS SUCH AN EXPENSIVE AND INEFFICIENT FACILITY, IT HAS BEEN REPLACED BY A MULTI-PURPOSE COMMONS HALL, A FLEXIBLE ONE-STORY STRUCTURE SEATING 300 PERSONS, WHICH CAN BE DIVIDED INTO TWO OR THREE SECTIONS, OR AREAS FOR TEAM TEACHING. THE COMMONS HALL CAN ALSO BE USED FOR DRAMATICS, AS A "THEATER IN THE ROUND", FOR SOCIAL EVENTS, CONCERTS BY THE SCHOOL BAND OR CHORAL GROUP: AND FOR A MULTITUDE OF SIMILAR EVENTS INCLUDING USE BY CIVIC GROUPS IN THE AREA.

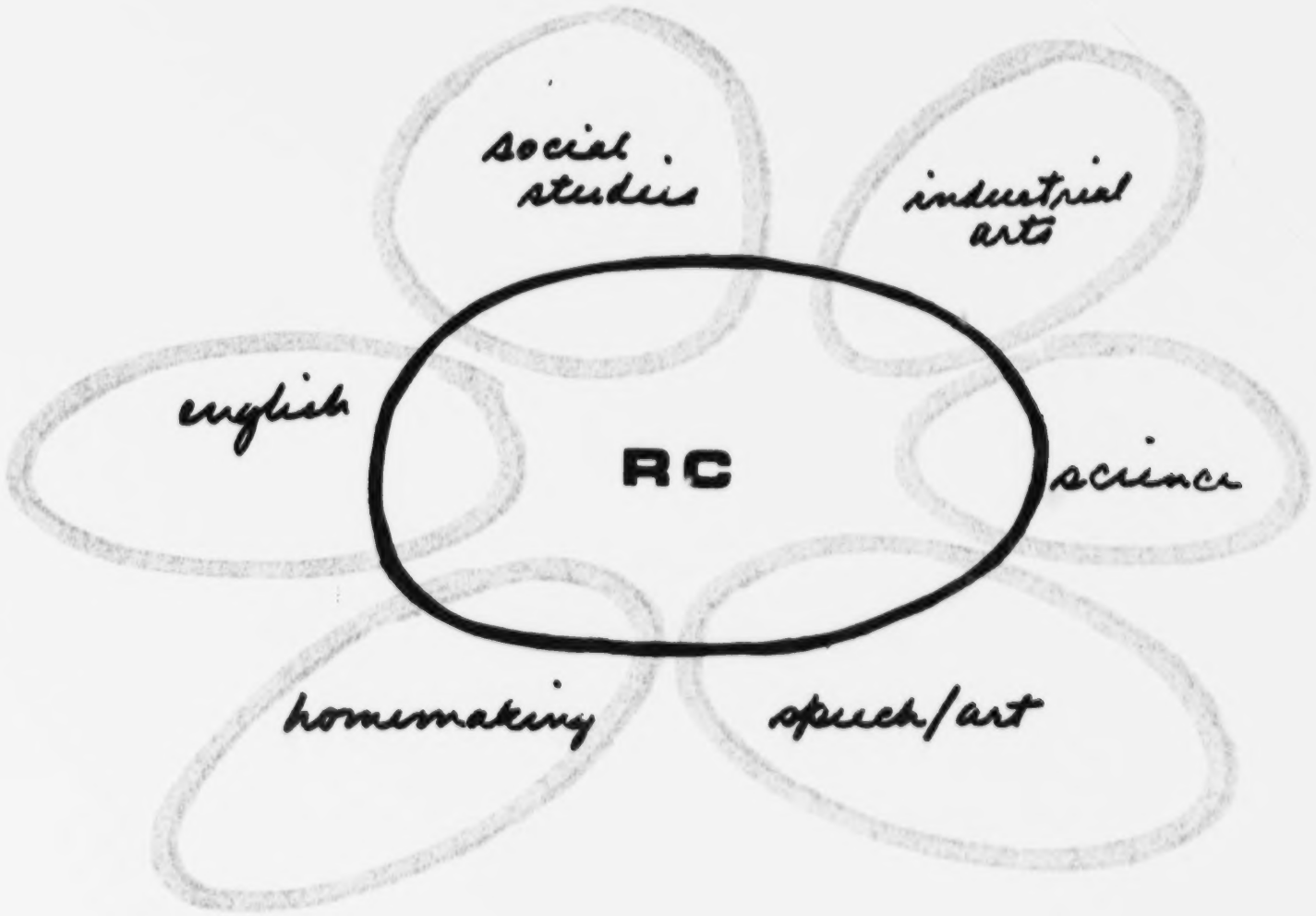


Students can eat lunch or have group meetings on a large sloped grass area

TO THE WEST OF THE THREE LEVEL CORE IS A COVERED BUT OPEN SNACK BAR FACILITY WITH AN OPEN, SLOPED GRASSED AREA TO ITS WEST. THIS AREA WILL PERMIT STUDENTS TO EAT UNDER COVER OR ON THE GRASSED AREA, AND WILL ALSO PROVIDE A LARGE OUTDOOR AREA FOR GROUP MEETINGS.

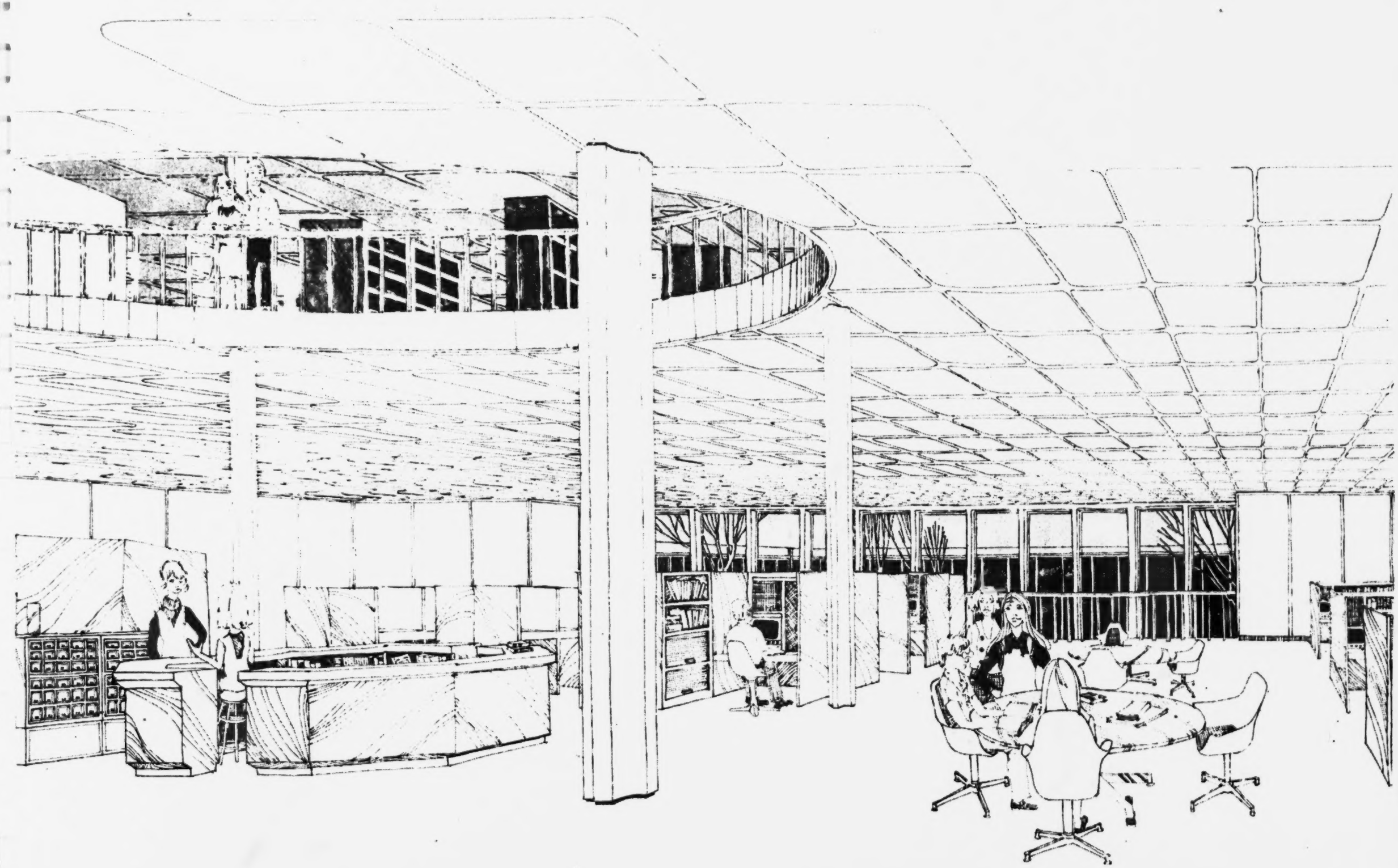
TO THE EAST OF THE THREE LEVEL CORE IS A LARGE LANDSCAPED COURT. BEYOND THAT IS THE ADMINISTRATIVE WING AT GROUND LEVEL, AND THE HOMEMAKING AND SPEECH DEPARTMENTS AT THE UPPER LEVEL.





The Resource Center becomes the new "home base" of the student

THE RESOURCE CENTER IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE STUDENT'S NEW INVOLVEMENT IN THE LEARNING PROCESS. THE OPEN PLAN INTRODUCES A MIXING OF EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES WHICH IN TURN CAUSE THE STUDENT TO PROGRESS AT HIS OWN RATE WITHIN HIS OWN INTERESTS AND CAPABILITIES. THE RC THUS BECOMES AN EXPANDED "HOME BASE" FOR THE STUDENT, RATHER THAN THE OLD CLASSROOM.



WHEN KIRKWOOD IS COMPLETED IN 1971, IT WILL, WE FEEL, CONTAIN THE NEWEST CONCEPTS IN SCHOOL PLANNING AND SHOULD BE A DELIGHTFUL EXPERIENCE FOR THE STUDENTS AND FACULTY.

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